CHOOSE YOUR OWN VALENTINE

A VALENTINE'S ADVENTURE OF MILD PERIL AND EXCESSIVE SNARK

CAN YOU CATCH THE INCONVENIENTLY HANDSOME CLOAKED FIGURE?

INTRODUCTION

You are Bonnie the Badass, wielder of the +3 Sword of Overcompensation and pursuer of one Inconveniently Handsome Cloaked Figure.

He has left behind a note:

Catch me if you can ;)

The winky face is the true insult.

You sprint after him.

Turn the page

THE GARDEN OF UNWELCOME FURNATURE

Your hunt begins in a moonlit garden where your path is blocked by...

A gazebo!

But this is no ordinary gazebo.

This one towers with menace and smells faintly of varnish. A plaque on its side reads:

WARNING : WILL BITE

Its latticework bristles.

Its tiles glisten.

Its shadow looms.

It does not move. It does not speak. It simply radiates the energy of something that once ate an adventurer and still has their backpack stuck in its rafters.

If you attack the gazebo with heroic gusto turn to page 7

If you attempt to walk around it turn to page 14

THE CLOAKED FIGURE'S BIG ORGAN.
THE MUSICAL ONE.
STOP SNIGGERING.

The *ding* of the typewriter rouses you like an alarm clock. A panel in the wall swings open to reveal...

An enormous organ.

A gargantuan organ.

An organ so large it looks like someone kidnapped a cathedral, wrung it out like a sponge, and mounted whatever dripped out onto the wall. After fanning your cheeks and resetting your dropped jaw you read an adjacent plaque:

TO PROCEED, PLAY THE CORRECT CHORD.

DO NOT PLAY THE INCORRECT CHORD.

SERIOUSLY, DON'T DO IT.

SYSTEM DELICATE.

(WE MEAN IT.)

You approach the bench. It creaks ominously, as though it remembers what happened the last time you sat on furniture.

Turn the page

You try pressing one note.

It *tsks* you contemptuously.

You try pressing two notes.

They razz you.

You try holding three notes.

A sad trombone noise.

Right. You've had quite enough of this! With all the grace of an elephant diving into a cup of water, you launch yourself onto the entire keyboard.

The instrument screams: a dissonant, apocalyptic scream, as if all the music teachers suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced.

And then...

squeak...

A little door beneath the organ pathetically wafts open like a white flag flinching in a breeze.

You hastily make your escape.

Turn to page 8

THE ESCAPE ROOM OF DOOM.
AND COPPER SPRAY PAINT.

The Tall, Dark, Infuriatingly Smug Stranger gives you a jaunty little finger wiggle as he slips into a nondescript building. You kick down the door (heroically, but also because the handle looked at you funny) and step into a brass and steam monstrosity of a chamber that appears to have been designed by:

1. Ohdear the Overengineer, a pedantic dwarf with OCD and too much time on his hands,
2. An art school dropout, and
3. At least three committees that aggressively failed to communicate.

Gears spin with questionable enthusiasm. Pipes hiss like judgmental cats. And on the wall hangs a motivational poster declaring:

FAILURE BUILDS CHARACTER.

AND OCCASIONALLY EXPLOSIONS.

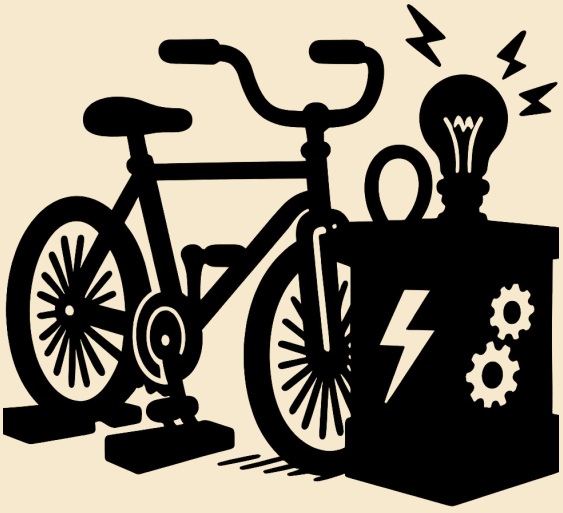
Turn the page

You are confronted with a Victorian pedal bike generator that looks like someone welded together a unicycle, a chandelier, and poor life choices.

You climb aboard.

You pedal.

The lights flicker like they're deciding whether living is worth the effort. Steam sighs. A code inflates upon a balloon.



If you keep pedalling turn to page 15

If you type the code into a typewriter turn to page 12

PICKING A FIGHT WITH LANDSCAPING

You swing your sword.

The Gazebo shudders, lets out a sound like an offended garden centre, and collapses dramatically—

—only for you to realise you just hit a decorative support beam!

The real monster was behind it the whole time.

You stab that one too.

It falls over immediately.

Victory?

Unclear, but you step over the splinters with triumph.

Turn to page 5

A GAME OF GROANS

You tumble out of the organ's poorly ventilated escape flap and land in—

A TAVERN.

A terrifying tavern.

A tavern so fearsome it has no Tripadvisor reviews—every one was "taken down", and not by moderators. At first glance, it is packed with the roughest, toughest goons ever to fail a charisma check:

- An eight-foot barbarian with an axe the size of a canoe and a head the size of an apple.
- A necromancer shaking two dice like he's threatening them.
- Someone gnawing a turkey leg like it owed them money.

You take one cautious step.

Shik.

Your arm brushes against someone's blade.

Oh no.

Turn the page

You look down expecting to find your arm severed on the floor.

But it isn't?

Instead, the sword has bent against your bicep like a depressed pool noodle.

This isn't a den of cutthroats.

It's something far worse.

This is a room full of LARPers mid-campaign!

You need to get out of here, and fast. You scan the room for your quarry. You spot him sitting in a corner, hood low, cloak dramatic, aura annoyingly attractive.

You approach his table for a final showdown.

He smiles and unveils a game of Patchwork.

A quilting duel.

A fabric fracas.

He gestures for you to sit.

You sit.

If you concentrate on the game turn to page 16

If you concentrate on the stranger turn the page

THOUGHT YOU'D WIN?
FRAYED KNOT.

You should focus on the game.

You *should*.

But then he reaches for a piece and the hood slips back just an inch.

You see it.

The jawline.

Sharp enough to cleave your resolve.

The eyes.

Flashy, mischief-sparkling, made to destroy concentration.

The smile.

A devil-may-care, rules-optional grin that says "Yes, I probably did steal your heart, and no, I will not apologize."

Patchwork pieces blur.

You place a patch upside-down.

Before you know it your quilt looks like the plaything of a hundred cats.

Your time is up.

Turn the page

The tavern owner stomps over.

"GAME NIGHT'S OVER! TAKE YOUR STOMACH-TURNING FLIRTING OUTSIDE BEFORE SOMEONE STARTS WRITING FANFIC!"

You and the Cloaked Figure are marched out the door like a pair of delinquent teens kicked out of a library for giggling.

You lost Patchwork.

But perhaps you won something else?

Your adventure starts here

THE DEADLY GRIND

Typing.

Ugh.

The mortal enemy of Swordmaidens and office workers alike.

It's OK. All you have to do is type a few letters of code on an old typewriter.

No big deal.

Easy, in fact.

You place a heroic finger over a key. And then immediately pull it back—

— hang on. You should probably stretch first. You don't want to injure yourself doing something as dangerous as light clerical input!

You roll your shoulders.

You crack your knuckles.

You lean toward the typewriter again—

— and realize you should definitely get a drink of water first. Hydration is productivity, after all. That's a known fact proven by... someone. Probably.

Turn the page

There is no water in the room.

You spend fifteen minutes looking anyway, tugging on drawers that definitely weren't meant to be opened, then tugging them again just to be sure.

Eventually, feeling more parched and less productive, you return to the typewriter.

You poise your fingers.

You sharpen your focus.

You can do this.

But maybe you should check the code balloon one more time.

Just to make sure it hasn't changed.

You stare at it for a scientifically unnecessary amount of time.

It has not changed.

Eventually, after ordering and re-ordering the desk, writing a to-do list of things you've already done, taking a powernap or three, and spending eighteen minutes choosing the perfect posture to begin work, you enter the code.

Turn to page 3

ESCAPING THE LANDSCAPING

You nod politely at the Gazebo.

The Gazebo responds by continuing to be furniture.

You skirt around it.

It tries to loom.

You refuse to acknowledge the looming.

By the laws of awkward social interaction—you win!

Turn to page 5

FEELING THE BURN

You bravely ignore the code balloon—because reading is for wizards—and decide that more pedalling is the answer.

You pedal harder.

The room begins to rumble.

You pedal **harder**.

A klaxon blares in a tone that can only mean "*Oh no, they're doing THAT again.*"

You pedal **even harder**, because at this point your pride is involved.

Sweating profusely, you begin to remember something you read on a poster about failure? And explosions? But before you can finish the thought, the bicycle rattles apart and your adventure comes to an abrupt end in a heap of gears, spokes, and *papier mache*.

Your adventure ends here.

A SEAMLESS VICTORY

He plays a patch.

You play a better one.

He winces.

You smirk.

A crowd gathers as if there were a sale on *Red Sonja* comics.

You sprint around the time board.

You hoard buttons like a tiny capitalist dragon.

The final score hits.

You win!

You win so hard the dwarf in the corner drops his cheese stick.

The Defeated Rogue lifts his hood. His eyes glow with admiration.

He holds out his hand.

You pause for a moment, then take it.

When you retract your hand, you are surprised to find a small Valentine's card in your palm. It reads:

Claim me if you dare ;)

Your adventure starts here